

1 Thessalonians 3:11-13

A Strong Love

1

Introduction

The greatest virtue in the world is love. This is the one possession that man must have if he is to have an abundant life. Without love man is nothing. Paul knew this; therefore, he went before God and prayed that the Thessalonian church and its believers might grow in love more and more. The model church will be a church that has a strong love.

1. Paul's great prayer (v. 11).
2. The great need – love (v. 12).
3. The great result of love (v. 13).

2

1 Thessalonians 3:11-13

Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. ¹² And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we *do* to you, ¹³ so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

3

Paul's Great Prayer

1 Thessalonians 3:11

Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you.

This is Paul's great prayer for the Thessalonian church and its believers.

Note to whom Paul prays. Paul prays to both God and Christ, and in so doing, he reveals who God is and who Christ is.

a. Paul prays to our God. This is the Supreme Being of the universe, the Creator and Maker of all things, the Giver and Sustainer of life and of everything else, the Person who dwells everywhere in perfect and supreme power, knowledge, and being.

4

Paul's Great Prayer

1 Thessalonians 3:11

Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you.

Note that this is the picture of God that **some men think** about when they think of God. They think of a God who is in the heavens—in outer space someplace—a God who rules and reigns but is somewhat removed and not too interested in man. The point is this: Paul reveals that God is what some men think: supreme, majestic, ruling and reigning. But note the next point: **God is more,** much more.

5

Paul's Great Prayer

1 Thessalonians 3:11

Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you.

b. Paul prays to **our God and Father Himself**. God is **a Father to us, intimately involved in our lives**. He is not just in outer space ruling and reigning and being far removed from us. God our Father is right here **with us**; He is **actively participating** in our lives just as an earthly father participates in the lives of his children. Therefore Paul, as a child, approaches God our Father and asks Him for certain things; and when he asks, he knows that his Father will hear and answer. He knows because God is not only able to answer, but God is his Father.

6

Paul's Great Prayer

1 Thessalonians 3:11

Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you.

c. Paul prays to our Lord Jesus Christ. He prays ...

- to our Lord, the Supreme Ruler of the universe who has existed eternally in heaven and who loves us enough to become our Lord.
- to our Lord Jesus, the Lord from heaven who loved us enough to come to earth in the person of Jesus, the Jewish carpenter from Nazareth to save us from our sins.
- to our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus who was the promised Messiah and Savior of the world. (The word Christ means Messiah and Savior.)

7

Paul's Great Prayer

1 Thessalonians 3:11

Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you.

The point is this: Paul revealed that God Himself is our Father and that Jesus Christ Himself is the Lord God from heaven. Both the Father and the Son have the nature of God; therefore, both have co-existed eternally. For this reason, Paul prayed both to God our Father and to our Lord Jesus Christ.

8

Paul's Great Prayer

1 Thessalonians 3:11

Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you.

Paul asked the Father and the Lord Jesus **to direct and guide his way to the Thessalonians**. He wanted both God and the Lord Jesus working to open the door for him to return to the dear believers at Thessalonica. Remember: Satan had created some terrible problems and obstacles to keep Paul from returning to the church (1 Th. 2:18; 3:7). But he longed to return; therefore, he wanted both the Father and Son working on the matter. Hence, he addressed the request to both.

9

The Great Need – Love

1 Thessalonians 3:12

And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we *do* to you.

The great need for which Paul prayed is the great need of every believer – **the need for love and to grow in that love**.

⇒ The word **increase** means to abound, to multiply over and over.

⇒ The word **abound** means to excel and overflow.

As stated, the great need is to grow in love; to abound and multiply, to excel and overflow in love. But note the crucial point that the love being spoken about is **not what the world means by love**. This is seen in two points.

10

The Great Need – Love

1 Thessalonians 3:12

And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we *do* to you.

1. The love that we must grow in is the love that makes us love all men, not just one another. Note the verse: “The Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all.” The love we are to have is the love that reaches out and overflows and multiplies toward everyone. This means those who are unattractive, orphans, sick, our enemies, the unsaved, those who do not agree with you politically, and those who try to hurt and use you.

11

The Great Need – Love

1 Thessalonians 3:12

And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we *do* to you.

How in the world can we love some of these people?
How can we abound in love for them? How is it possible to love those who do evil to us and who treat us as enemies? Is it even practical to ask us to love all men? Is it even humanly possible? No! It is humanly possible for us to love those who hate us and who stand as enemies against us. There is only one way to love like this.

12

The Great Need – Love

1 Thessalonians 3:12

And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we *do* to you.

2. **The source of love is the Lord.** There is no other source that gives us the ability to love all men. This is the reason Paul went before the Lord and requested such a love. Paul knew that it was impossible for him or the Thessalonians to work up the kind of love that could reach out and abound toward all men – especially to those who were persecuting them!

13

The Great Result of Love

1 Thessalonians 3:13

so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

The great result of love is to be presented blameless before God when Christ returns to earth. This is the most glorious result imaginable. Note several striking facts.

1. The word **establish** means to “**prop, support, confirm, fix, make fast, set**”. Note: it is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who establishes our hearts before God. No one else has the right or power to set us before God and no one else can make us acceptable to God. The word “hearts” here refers to the whole person.

14

The Great Result of Love

1 Thessalonians 3:13

so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

2. The word blameless means to be free from fault and blame; to be free from all charges. The word holiness means to be set apart and separated to God. It is the Lord Jesus Christ who can make our hearts blameless in holiness before our God. He alone can free us from the faults and charges of sin and present us blameless and holy before God.

15

The Great Result of Love

1 Thessalonians 3:13

so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

3. When is this glorious presentation to God going to take place? When Christ returns with all His saints. Jesus will present all believers—every single one of us—to God:

- ⇒ all the believers who have died and gone to be with the Lord
- ⇒ all the believers who are raptured when He returns.

16

So What ...

1 Thessalonians 3:13

so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

What a “Grand Reunion”! It will be the glorious day of our presentation before God. We will see Him face to face and be presented to Him blameless and holy and we will be with Him forever and ever! “The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints” will take place! It is the promise of God Himself and therefore it cannot be stopped! And no man should want to stop it. On the contrary, all men should prepare and welcome it.